

A BORN COQUETTE.

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CHAPTER XXXV.

"Don't listen to tales of his beauty,
Don't hear what they say of his birth,
Don't look at his set in the country,
Don't let me tell you of his worth.""Oh! poor, poor Nan! Oh, what a
terrible shame! To purposely carry her off like
that, and compel her at the dagger's point to
marry him! He's a regular brigand," says
Gladys, with conviction, when she too has read
the letter from Nan (that had been interrupted
by Lady Despard) handing it back to Penelope."I'm going to tell him what I say— and we
must have him in a week," she replies.Penelope, who has snatched a chair, and seems
incapable of ever getting out of it again!

"Good heavens! What a monster! Knowing

that she did not care for him—and she

didn't—she quite made her mind that she

wouldn't—she remembers, Fen! He still

with deliberation, mind you, steals her! Oh!

"How miserable she is! Can nothing

be done to help her to stop this hateful mar-

riage?"

"Nothing. You see the date of her letter,

and the day she mentions for the wedding?"

Here Penelope stops, and gives a great start,

and glances at the clock.

"She is being married this moment," cries she, as if the world had

indeed come to an end.

"Oh! Fen! Oh! Fen! say that Penelope."

"I do! I do! I do!" impishly, "seven, she

says, and it is on the stroke of seven now."

"It is all over!" breathes Gladys solemnly,

after which an appropriate silence follows.

It is broken by the entrance of Murphy, who,

tired of waiting for a summons, has come in to

take away the remains of a breakfast, abnormally

prompt. Why has the usual call not sounded?

There is a sudden look of curiosity in the twinkle

of Murphy's eye as he casts a hasty glance at

his "young ladies."

Hume's telegram from Milford had been insi-

cient to the easing of anxiety about Nan in

the Dolaney household; and now, seeing Miss

Gladys almost in tears, and Miss Penelope

as white as the "chirren snow," it is a simple thing

to see Fen. He is sure that whatever the trouble

is, it is not his fault, and so far he has

had to sustain it with Nan.

Having conched once or twice, and made a

pretense of dropping a plait, all to no avail, he

takes his courage in both hands and says bluntly

to Penelope—

"I'm chokin'! It's troubled ye are, Miss, about
something or other. Give it a name, me dear,
an' I'll give ye the bether for it."

"Oh! Nan! Nan! Nan! Penelope! I'm sorry for her!"

He made up a plait and carried her off against

her will, exactly like those horrible people long

ago who used to hire coaches and run away with

our great-grandmothers, no matter whether they

were willing or not. Only he has used a yacht.

Can't be punished, and—poor Nan—resumed

from him! And who'd have thought it of him,

now? She always saw through him, didn't she?

"He must—he shall be punished," says Penelope.

"Why don't you speak, Murphy?" Abuse

him as much as you like; it will to his heart.

"Why don't you abuse him, Murphy?"

In truth it has begun to suggest itself to

them that there is something sinister in Mr.

Murphy's silence.

"He breaks it."

"Tell me this. Has he married her?" asks

he at last.

"Why of course; that's the crime," says Gladys.

"It would be all right only for that.

But he has crowned his villainy, he has married her indeed. This very morning. Even now!"

There is something positively awesome in the tone in which she says this, yet it fails to

impress the hardened Murphy.

"Did you ever hear of such effrontery?"

purrs Penelope, taking up the story, "carrying

her off—ordering her to marry him, as it were

dragging her to the alter almost by the hair of her head! Oh! Murphy! She's pretty head, Oh,

don't you speak, Murphy?" It is quite plain to everyone

present, that Penelope's mind is now as

bewildered as the sun.

"Arrah be airy!" says Mr. Hume, breaking

upon the postural rite with a shrill and

terribly ungraceful prose.

"She's married she is, ye say, to Miester Hume! Fergs, if that's thure, 'tis the finest thing that ever happened to her!"

Had the heavens then and there lit a

thunderbolt into their midst, it could hardly

have caused greater consternation than this speech.

"Murphy!" gasps Gladys. She gapes at him

with a cautious eye. Perhaps the poor old man

had gone off his head, and no wonder, too! Such

news is enough to upset the intellect of the

sanest.

"You haven't understood, Murphy, havayou?"

"I'll say it all over again. The old man is this day.

I only hope I'll live to see the next 50 in half

such clover. Ten thousand years! I do, to be

whom a thought he'd plunk in him to do it so

natively. Wisha, more power to his show off say I.

"Thanks be, that I've lived to see wan of the

poor misbreth's children so decently settled

in life."

"Penelope! How can you listen to him,

Was there ever such a traitor as him?"

"A traitor? Why, who'd call him a

traitor for him?" demands Mr. Murphy, whose

drowsy conscience prevents his taking this oppro-
rietary epithet to himself. "Haven't he put her

at the head of the country. Where'll the Daunts

be now, I wonder?" or "The O'Grady's wid their

old carriages that as mouldy as themselves, an

the Moncks wid their musty gowns, an' their

old hats, an' all that?"

"Well, I suppose he's like that," cries Penelope.

"How dare you speak of him like that!"

"Murphy! Penelope being gashed with horror,

"I didn't even mention him. The misb—"

"Fen! I am to be the wretched man!"

"Good heavens! What a face! I do, to be

the man in question to the death!"

"Murphy! He's married! To Nan! Nan is

so good! She's married to Nan!"

"Murphy! Have no heart. Have you

no thought beyond money?"

"Pathy is it? That's where ye show how

ignorant ye are; an' quite right too for young

creatures like ye!"

"Murphy! I am to be the wretched man!"

"I am to be the wretched man!"

"Murphy! I am to be the wretched man!"